MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over. ...(*Interruptions*)... Question Hour is over. ...(*Interruptions*)... Question Hour is over. ...(*Interruptions*)...

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Data on Railway Bridges

*81. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether CAG has warned that the absence of data on construction of over one lakh railway bridges may hamper their monitoring; and

(b) if so, the remedial measures proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) No, Sir. CAG has only observed that date of construction of some bridges is not available with some Railways and this may hamper their monitoring.

(b) The year of opening of line has been adopted as the year of construction of the bridges. The Bridges Inspection Register record is accordingly under updation. However, rehabilitation/rebuilding of bridges does not depend merely on the age of the bridges, but on the physical condition as ascertained during the inspection of the bridges for which, a well laid down multitier annual inspection procedure for each and every bridge exists. The distressed bridges are inspected more frequently.

All the old Cast Iron Pile Foundation Bridges and Bridges with Early Steel Superstructure have been sanctioned for rebuilding. All distressed bridges are sanctioned for rehabilitation/rebuilding each year as continuous process.

Action has also been taken for modernization of Bridge Inspection and Management System as per details given in Para 2.4.5 of the White Paper on Railway Safety which has been laid in the Rajya

Sabha on 07.04.2003. It is planned to make the existing inspection and monitoring systems more scientific as detailed in above para by importing modern technology for inspection and assessment of condition of bridges by using.

(i) Under water Inspections.

(ii) Mapping unknown foundations and integrity testing of foundations.

(iii) Non-Destructive Testing Techniques like Ultra Sonics, Acoustic Emission, Strain Gauging and Radar etc.

(iv) Fatigue life and residual life assessment techniques.

(v) Modern Bridges Management System.

Pilot projects for items (i) to (v) of above activities have been sanctioned. Purchase of Non-destructive testing equipment has been sanctioned for setting up of mobile testing laboratories over 9 Zonal Railways at a cost of 12.7 crores this year.

Suicide by farmers in Andhra Pradesh

*87. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) number of farmers who committeed suicide due to crop loss or indebtedness in Andhra Pradesh during the last three years, year-wise and district-wise; and

(b) what steps Government have taken or propose to take to ensure that hapless farmers do not resort to this extreme step in State and rest of the country?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): (a) and (b) 1. According to the information made available by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh the number of farmers who committed suicide due to crop loss or indebtedness in Andhra Pradesh during the last three years is indicated in the Statement enclosed (*See* below)

2. The Reserve Bank of India in consultation with the Government